



**Town and
Country
Harriers
(TACH)**

ROUGH RUNNING NEWS

March 2026

From the Chair

It's been a wet and muddy winter for trail running but, as usual, this hasn't deterred TACHers from getting out and about with races, social runs and recces for the Butcombe Trail Ultra. Whilst it's still raining at the time of writing, Spring is very much in the air and we're looking forward to the longer evenings. We have another packed programme of TACH races, away weekends and of course our beloved regular Thursday night social runs coming up for the rest of 2026. We're well into my second year as TACH Chair, and I continue to be impressed and hugely grateful for the amazing work that goes on behind the scenes by our Committee Members and other volunteers to bring all our activities to you. After celebrating our 30th anniversary last year, TACH continues to be probably the best trail running club and community. Keep on running! Helen



Editors' Intro



Welcome to Rough Running News for Spring 2026. As we leave behind a cold and very wet winter, the theme of this edition is getting out and about for a run. Take a look at where the TACH social runs took place in 2025 and check out some ideas for longer runs further afield.

We always welcome any contribution, so if you'd like to share some thoughts with fellow TACH members, why not send us something for the next edition? Also, let us have any suggestions for how we can improve TACH communications – speak to us on a run, or email comms@tach.com

Alex and Sarah





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Do you have a product recommendation to share with fellow TACHers?

Perhaps you have a favourite recipe for some delicious running food?

Or you have an interesting story to tell, or idea you want to explore with others?

Why not write about it for Rough Running News!

Next edition copy deadline is **31 June 2026**

Please send your articles, photos or anything else you want to see included to

comms@tach.club

Thank you 😊



Meet a TACHer

Tom Houseago (Captain Tom)

Tell us a little bit about yourself! (where are you from, what job do you do...._)

Hello! I'm Tom Houseago. I live in Totterdown and I currently work in a local wine bar. I have had lots of different jobs, recently I've worked as a Gardener, a Chef and a Baker. I like trying new things! I also have the privilege of being the current Club Captain.

What led you to take up trail running?

A friend invited me to do a trail race on the Exmoor coastline and I loved it! I had somewhat fallen out of love with running after an extremely dull road marathon. When I moved to Bristol from London three years ago I made myself a promise to do more trail running!



**How did you first discover TACH and when did you join?**

I discovered TACH from a search online and I joined in November 2023. My first Thursday run was from the Swan in Swineford, I think led by Andy Grant. I've been coming regularly ever since.

What's your favourite thing about TACH?

I love the sense of community, the positive energy and the passion everyone has for trail running in all its different forms.

Do you have a favourite place to run/ running route you'd like to share with RRN readers?

We are lucky in Bristol to have some hills and I love my local 5k loop taking in Perretts Park and Victoria Park. The views are great. But it's hard to beat running along any of our amazing coastline. I am lucky to have family in South Devon and love running along the coastal path up and down the dramatic red sandstone cliffs with the fresh sea air in my lungs.

If money and time were no obstacle, what would your dream run be, and why?

I would have to pick somewhere with good mountains and good food as that is my other true love. So perhaps a month slowly running through northern Italy or Japan, stopping at different places learning about local cuisines along the way.

What's your favourite distance and type of terrain?

Having grown up in the fenlands of Lincolnshire, hills are still somewhat of a novelty to me and I love running up and down them. I enjoy a technical downhill section where I get to channel my inner mountain goat.

Do you have a favourite bit of running kit – and why?

If I am being honest, probably my watch with maps - I like being able to delegate map reading as I have a tendency to get lost. Something to work on in the years ahead!

If you had one tip for anyone new to trail running, what would it be?

Look behind you. To me the joy of being on the trails is being connected to nature and after running up that steep hill, take some time to stop and enjoy all 360 degrees of the view you have just earned!

Do you currently have any running goals?

I never thought I would run an ultramarathon, but then I joined TACH and wanted to see what the buzz was about after hearing and reading peoples inspiring stories. Last year I did my first two - Imber and the TACH Solstice Run to Stonehenge. I loved them both and this year I have signed up to run a 80km UTMB race in Slovenia.



If you had to put these in order from like to dislike, what would the order be?

Sunsets - bluebells - hills (down) - sunrises - cider - hills (up) - mud - races - marshalling - 5am starts - nettles - cows - getting lost - gels - black toenails - tics

What's the most interesting book you've read in the past year, and why?

My favourite book I read last year was 'I Want My Hat Back' by Jon Klassen . It's not clear to me if it's a book for adults or children. According to the Guardian it is 'the funniest book ever written' and I can't disagree. Guaranteed laughs for all ages.

What's the best film that you've seen in the past year?

The Ballad of Wallis Island. It's a 10/10. Written and starring one of my favourite comics Tim Key and featuring Carey Mulligan, it's a film that will make you laugh and cry and wraps itself around you with the warmth of what it is to be human.

What's your favourite song/ band? And do you run to music?

I love listening to music, but not when running. My favourite album at the moment is Space 1.8 by the jazz harpist Nala Sinephro. It's a beautiful instrumental piece that blurs the line between electronic, jazz and ambient music. Put it on, close your eyes and be transported to a new dimension.





Getting out and about

The days are getting longer, the skylarks are singing, it may even have stopped raining. With the coming of Spring, we're offering up some inspiration for your next run. Take a look at where TACH runs took place in 2025 and read about a couple of community runs the other side of the Severn and a run through history with Andy Grant's Timsbury Tickle.

Map my run (the TACH version) and a run around (or two) Sarah Smith

The format of the regular, Thursday social runs is simple. A couple of people volunteer, pick an area in or around Bristol, choose a pub and plan long and short routes. Chatting to TACH-ers on these runs, it is clear that one of the things that many love about the club is the chance to explore different parts of the city and surrounding countryside.

So where could TACH have taken you in 2025? The map below shows the locations of all the Thursday runs, plus the Saturday socials listed on the spreadsheet. Can you spot yours?



Hopefully this will inspire you to lead a run (or two) in your favourite place. From Butcombe reces in the West to an Imber recce in the East to a Thursday nighter on the edge of Yate, we covered a lot of Bristol and the surrounding countryside covered. But anyone for South Bristol? It looks like unexplored territory!



If you are looking for something further afield – specifically the other side of the Prince of Wales Bridge – why not try the Dennison Round or the Enzo Round and earn yourself a free cup of coffee.

The **Dennison Round (the “Denni”)** was created by the lovely people at [First Light Coffee](#) in honour of one of their running mates. It starts and finishes at the café, in the village of Tongwynlais, nestling below Castell Coch. The premise is simple. Start at the café, run around the three peaks of The Garth, Craig Yr Allt and Caerphilly Mountain, and Castell Coch, and head back to the café when you are done. You ring a bell to start and stop the “official” timer.



There isn't an official route: You need to be able to prove that you have visited the three peaks and the door of Castell Coch but you can go in any direction, by any paths that you want. The last time I completed it, I clocked 11.3 miles and 2,559 feet of elevation. If you're interested, I'd be happy to share the gpx (which I stole off someone else's strava post).

If you complete the route, you are rewarded with a free cup of coffee at the café and your name on the board for the week. Getting a more permanent place on the leader board is



getting increasingly challenging – it looked like someone had done the route in little over an hour.

I thoroughly recommend the Denni. It's a cracking route – there's a fair bit of elevation, but both times I have done it, I have been rewarded with far-reaching views and gorgeous ridge running from Garth and Craig Yr Allt. There are also sections of lovely wooded trails, heading down from the Garth (magically decorated with Christmas baubles in 2024) and running through Forest Fawr down to Castell Coch.



Having enjoyed exploring a new area with the Dennison Round so much, I was keen to try the **Enzo Round** when I spotted it online. This route starts from [Sole Mate](#) in Merthyr Tydfil – a lovely running shop, run by people who clearly love running. Their dog is named Enzo and there is a very cute picture of him in the shop.

The owner of Sole Mate planned the Enzo round as a training run one weekend – when we met him he was training for the Brecon-Cardiff race (extreme version). Unlike the Denni, the Enzo round comes with a gpx which you can download from Sole Mate's website. Like the Denni, there is also a promise of a free coffee for anyone finishing the route. There is a small kitchen at the back of the shop, but on the day, we weren't offered anything. However, the owners were super friendly at the start and finish – and were happy for us to use their loo!



The route is just over 12 miles and has around 1,600 feet of elevation. It starts outside the shop in the centre of Merthyr (there's free parking outside). This means that there's a bit of road running at the start (and finish), but most of the route is in lovely countryside with a good variety of hills, sheep, woods, and a reservoir. I can also recommend the Aberglais Inn (just outside Merthyr) for lunch afterwards (booking recommended).





The Timsbury Tickle (Andy Grant)



A cheesy title, but hopefully you will find this to be a nice little 12-mile run, for those interested in such things it runs through a landscape which still bears many of the scars of its rich industrial heritage, and for those who aren't – well it's just a nice, (relatively) flat run round some very picturesque English countryside, with some superb views and plenty of local wildlife to see. Either way, please get out there, lace up your trainers, give it a go and let me know what you think.



There is a small public car in Timsbury <https://maps.app.goo.gl/f9cufZXpIZeEoEyR9> but if its full, it should be possible to find a space on the surrounding streets, just don't forget where you have parked (yes, we've all done it).

The run starts from The Square (café) <https://maps.app.goo.gl/uCDaWLjsPhNCN7gS9>, nice café for afterwards, or alternatively Meadgate Farm café is also nice and just down the road, which ever one you chose don't forget to check their opening hours before you go.



So off you trot, a short section of road and you soon reach the roundabout on the other side of Timsbury, here you head off across the fields proper, past Bengrove wood and down a gentle slope to the river at the bottom of the valley. The river leads to the small village of Carlingcott and Carlingcott Mill. The mill is only 18th century, but the village itself is old enough to have been recorded in the doomsday book in 1086 AD.



As you leave Carlingcott, It's now just a gentle climb up out of the bottom of the valley and along the top ridge, on your way to the next village of Camerton.



Before you get to the village of Camerton you must run around the back of Camerton court



And past the old church nestled in the side of the hill.



The footpath then turns and runs right through part of along the estates ornate garden.



The Camerton Court estate has been here a little while, having been given to The Monks of Glastonbury Abbey by Alfred the Great, in around 900 AD.



The modern Manor house of Camerton Court that we see was built in 1835, with the remains of the old original Manor house converted into the stables beside it. I was chuffed to find out that my favourite West country Violin maker - Henry Lye worked here on the estate for 56 years.



The footpath eventually takes you out across the main road and down into the village of Camerton itself.





The stories here now are not of monks and kings but of miners and the coal pits they toiled in. The remains of some of the old mine workings can still be seen on the left hand side as you get to the bottom of the village, they are marked with a giant statue of a miner and several interpretation boards, they all tell the story of the villages long lost rich local industrial heritage, well worth a read if you have time and then maybe a quick cheeky selfie standing beside the miner's statue itself.

You now follow the remains of an old railway line for a little way till, nice and confusingly the footpath ends up going through someone's back garden, good job the owners have a cracking sense of humour and always laugh and smile when some walker/runner ends up lost and wandering around down by their wonderful rotary washing line.



A short bit of quiet road now and you are soon back on the old railway line, heading towards Radford. Now on your left is an old Bristol double decker bus in a communal compound where some of the locals live, it's a long time since this one dropped off its last passenger, but nice its now having a second lease of life serving as some one's home.

Now you drift away from the disused railway and find yourself starting to follow the remains of the disused coal canal instead.



It's very confusing when you try and make sense of which bit of the old coal transport network you are currently following. There were 80 pits in the Somerset coalfields, around Timsbury and Paulton, these were originally served with a canal (which was split into two branches), along with lots of railway infrastructure and lots of sections of tramway.

Then to make things even more interesting- when the canal closed, some sections were sold off, laid with new railway tracks and incorporated into additional branches of the local railway network. Of course, the train line too eventually had their day, the last one finally closing in 1951. One part of the line however did get a short stay of execution. In 1952 it was used for the filming of the classic old school black and white British film comedy "The Titfield Thunderbolt" before even that last section of track was sadly closed and the rails finally removed.



Everyone has heard of the legendary Bristol crocodile, it has frequently been seen swimming down in the New Cut, opposite Asda Bedminster, purely coincidentally of course it's usually seen by people on the way home from a heavy night out on the razz downtown. Now this canal has a decent sized croc too, if you keep your (sober) eyes peeled to left as you run along the canal tow path and you just may spot it.



This section of the canal is currently being restored by volunteers, they hope to one day see it returned to its former glory full and once again full of water.



On the left by the bridge is the old Timsbury Basin dry dock, when operational it could hold three Canal barges alongside each other, at one time this was the second biggest canal dry dock in the country, wow!

The canal now finishes here at the end of Timsbury Basin, once a busy hub of heavy industry with barges constantly transporting coal away from the many mines here, it's still full of water but now it's more tranquil, industry and coal barges being replaced by peace and quiet, with just a few duck and swans now left bobbing about on the water.



You have already had the pleasure of running through beautiful countryside and past a millionaire's mansion, no run then would be complete in the countryside without also enjoying the other side of the coin, and taking in the sight (and smell) of a nice sewerage treatment works, and this one delivers that - in spades, with a pleasant trot right through Paulton sewage treatment works, nice.

Paultons poop is soon left behind as you head up towards Rotcombe (nice name) and then past Kingwell hall, well known for its many friendly (but stern) looking sheep.



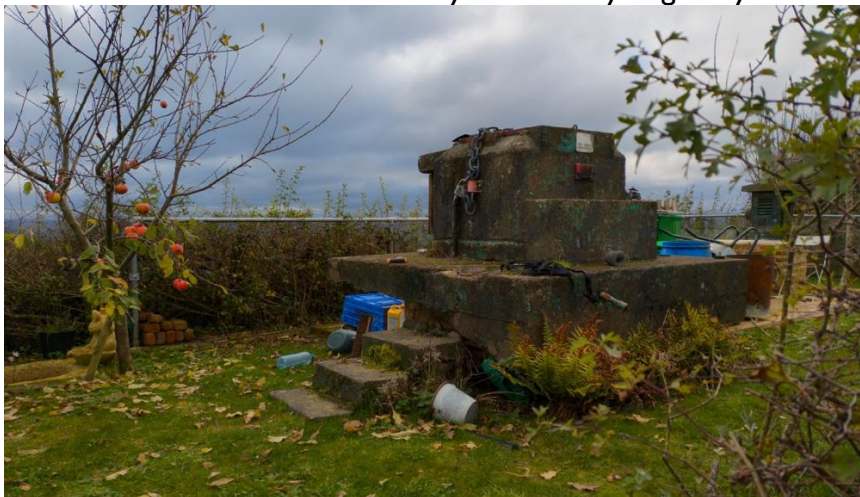
Crossing over the crossroads you then come to Barrow Hill. As you climb up it and approach the top, you get to appreciate the 360-degree views that this high and remote vantage point gives you, you can see as far as 50 (plus) miles away on a clear day. In the 1950's this location came to the attention the Ministry of Defence, who were looking for a location to build a large secret cold war civil defence installation, Barrow hill was picked as



the place it would be built, plans were made and work commenced, however from the start things didn't go to plan.

They had enlisted a team of Italian builders to come and do the construction work for them, lodgings were found for them at a local farm, so they came over and soon set to work. They immediately found that what they were digging down into, was in fact the site of an ancient Megalithic burial mound. They arrived back at their lodgings at the farm every evening after work, not only tired but also deeply unsettled, and had lots of scary tales of what they were finding buried inside the hill as they dug down, so much so that they wanted to abandon the work and leave the site and return home. Luckily for them before they could do this, when they were digging down, they hit solid bedrock, when they looked closer, they found the rock was riddled with an ancient network of caves. Now only with the use of heavy machinery and blasting with explosives.

This put a stop to being able to continue digging down any further, only with blasting with explosives and using heavy machinery to remove the rock could they continue, not ideal for a secret project trying to remain as low key as possible. When the MOD heard this and assessed the situation they were forced to scale back their plans to build a large installation and had to settle instead for building just a small nuclear fallout bunker/observation post, into the section of the hill that they had already dug away.



It was completed in 1959 and buried deep underground, it contains a 115 square foot main room, a separate toilet, an air filtration system and was equipped with a long-range radio communication station. It remained operational till 1991 and was then decommissioned and sealed up.

It stayed this way till 2018, when it was sold at auction for £23,000, it now remains in private hands and currently sits empty. You can now only see the top of the secure hatch, which sits in a small compound on top of the hill. Just imagine what a quirky Air B+B this would make. Window-less, pitch dark and eerily silent, all built inside an ancient burial mound, not creepy at all then!

You now leave the bunker behind and it's just now a short run down to where you cross the main road to Clutton, before then crossing a few fields and heading up to the top of your last little hill climb.



Once up on top of this hill (which is marked on the map as “The Sleigh”), you pass the three windmills, and once again enjoy spectacular 360-degree views stretching far off into the distance. Snaking round a large, covered hilltop reservoir you now start to descend towards Sleigh Farm.



The path goes around to the left of the farmyard but before the final decent there is one more sight to see, just before you turn off left - look straight ahead between the farm buildings, here on a clear day you can see hills that Salisbury Plain sits upon rising up in the far distance, and trust me, if you are lucky enough just here you can see the Westbury White Horse glistening in the sunshine.



With the White Horse (hopefully) spotted you are now nearly at the end of the run back where you started. Just a short run now down the track and past the small pond to the road now, here it's a unavoidable run of just a few 100 metres down the main road, till you get to the crossroads at the edge of the village, a right turn here and a short run along the pavement soon bring you back to the Square again and it's here that you then finish your run.

I hope you like the sound of this run and get to give it a go, please let me know how you get on and if you (hopefully) enjoy it. If this is a bit long then I have also split the route down into two halves', giving you the option of doing a 6-mile East half loop, and a 7.5-mile West



loop. The fact that these two runs are now approximately the length of the TACH long and short runs is purely coincidence, but if anyone knows a pub in Timsbury that could accommodate us with parking etc. well you never know.....

The route file of the full 12-mile route is here

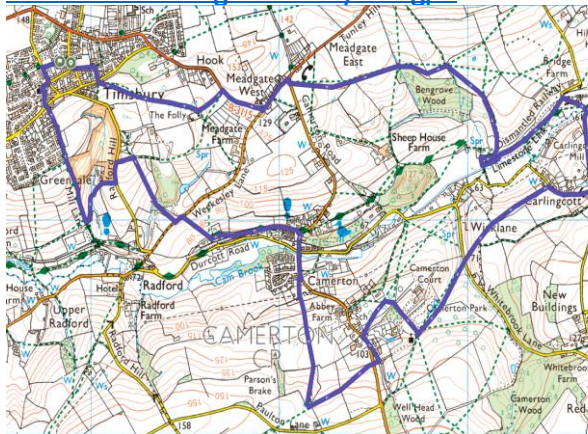
[TACH.Timsbury.Tickle.Full.Route.12m.gpx](#)



I have also split the route, giving you the option of doing the 6-mile East half or the 7.5-mile west half separately. The fact that these runs are now approximately the length of a TACH short and long run is purely coincidence obviously, but if anyone knows a pub in Timsbury with parking.....

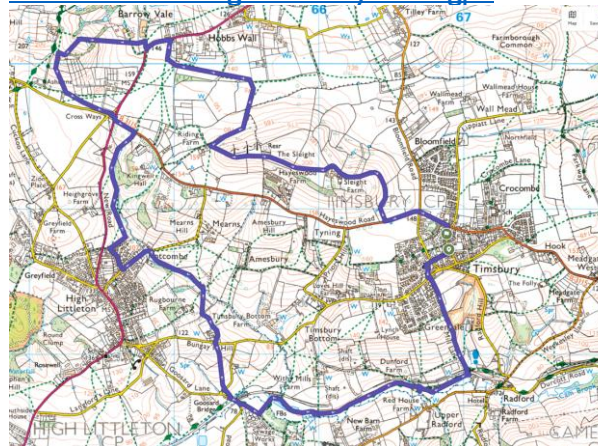
6-mile East half, route here

[TACH.1.East.Leg.Timsbury.6m.gpx](#)



And the 7.5-mile west route here

[TACH.2.West.leg.Timsbury.7.5m.gpx](#)





Upcoming TACH Runs and Events

Preseli Beast – a weekend in Pembrokeshire 8 – 10 May

The Preseli Beast is a friendly series of three trail races set in the stunning Preselli hills in Pembrokeshire on Saturday 9th May. There are 11, 24 and 32 mile options. TACH is offering an opportunity to make a weekend of it with places booked at a nearby bunkhouse in Trefin (the Old School Hostel). The cost of the accommodation is £50 for two nights' bed and breakfast. You can book a place here [here](#).

Cotswold Way Relay 4 July

103 miles of the beautiful Cotswold Way – from Chipping Camden to Bath – in ten stages. Join one of two TACH teams of ten. It's a relay in the loosest sense of the word in that each stage's runners set off at the same time. Each stage does have a (fairly generous) cut off. It's a beautiful route – and a favourite for many and there are a few TACH-ers who have done all ten stages over the years. Sam earned the crown last year. The route finishes in front of Bath Abbey and the plan is to celebrate together in a pub in Bath at the end. Email captain@tach.club to register your interest in joining one of the two teams of 10 runners (fully funded by TACH) or find out more about the event [here](#).

TACH race calendar for 2026

25 April	Butcombe Trail Ultra
16 July	Purdown Pursuit
18 October	Keynsham Dandy



TACH Kit



New to TACH? Want to look the part representing TACH when you run your next event? You can order any of the items below from George Hancu, our friendly Kit Meister (modelling the short-sleeved t-shirt in the photo), by emailing kit@tach.club. Or you chat to him when you next see him. George also organises a bulk order of TACH hoodies from time to time which come in a very attractive range of colours and styles for only approximately £20. If you want to be notified next time a hoodie order is happening, please do let George know.

Classic T (£18)



Summer vest (£16)



Long-sleeved top

(£19)



Buff (£5)



Mug (£5)



TACH Championship Points



Compiled by Tom Houseago, TACH Captain

Congratulations to Andy Grant for winning the 2025 Championship. This recognises TACH members who lead runs, help at events, and write articles for Rough Running News. The points system is as follows:

- 1 point for leading a run
- 2 points for first time leading a run
- 1 point for volunteering to help at a TACH event (marshalling, course setting, etc)
- 2 points for writing a Rough Running News article



General Club Information



Leading a TACH run

The club relies on its members to lead its weekly social runs every Thursday. If you want to give it a go, you just need to think about your favourite regular route and nominate a local pub (it doesn't have to have food). If you need more information, chat to the runmeisters Emily and Jenny (runmeister@tach.club) or some recent run leaders in the pub, or have a look at the guide on <https://tach.club> for leading runs.

Liftsharing groups

TACH has several liftsharing groups across Bristol to help us all to get to our club runs in a more sociable, decongesting way. Current liftsharing groups are in the following areas:

- South Bristol
- North Bristol
- East Bristol
- Long Ashton
- Cliftonwood, Clifton and Hotwells

If you'd like to join any of these liftshare groups, please do ask around when you're next on a run to find someone who belongs to one of these groups, so you can be invited to join the relevant WhatsApp group. If you'd like to set up a group in an area not listed, or there are enough people to form a smaller sub-group, please do take the initiative – these groups are all self-managing. You can contact comms@tach.club if you want to promote a new liftsharing group through our regular weekly emails, which can then also be added to this list for the next edition of Rough Running News.

Know your committee

Club Captain: Tom Houseago - captain@tach.club

Chair: Helen King - chair@tach.club

Secretary: Emma Truner - secretary@tach.club

Treasurer: Jonny Riley - treasurer@tach.club

Webmeister: Tom Hunt - website@tach.club

Race Committee Chair: Luke Taylor - races@tach.club

Social Secretary: vacant - social@tach.club

Membership Secretary: Pawel Baranowski - membership@tach.club

Run Meisters: Jenny Crouch and Emily Griffiths - runmeister@tach.club

Kit Meister: George Hancu - kit@tach.club

Rough Running News Editors/ Commsmeisters: Alex Smith and Sarah Smith
- comms@tach.club